

Message Text

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72

ORIGIN NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 EB-11 AGR-20 COME-00 H-02 AID-20 NSC-10

RSC-01 CIEP-02 SAL-01 SS-14 STR-08 OMB-01 CEA-02 PA-03

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EXT. 20701 3/12/73

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R 122356 Z MAR 73

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

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E. O. 11652, N/ A

TAGS: EAGR, IN

SUBJ: JIMSON WEED SEEDS

1. DURING APPEARANCE MARCH 12 BEFORE HAMILTON SUB-COMMITTEE OF HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, ASSISTANT SECRETARY SISCO WAS ASKED QUESTION CONCERNING JIMSON WEED SEEDS IN GRAIN SORGHUM PURCHASED BY INDIA FROM US. SISCO REPLIED ALONG FOLLOWING LINES:

JIMSON WEED GROWS IN THE U. S. AND OCCASIONALLY THE PLANTS ARE MECHANICALLY HARVESTED ALONG WITH GRAIN SORGHUM OR WHEAT. ALTHOUGH THE SEEDS ARE TOXIC TO HUMANS IF TAKEN IN SUFFICIENT QUANTITY, THIS HAS APPARENTLY NEVER BEEN A PROBLEM IN THIS COUNTRY.

THE STATE OF OUR KNOWLEDGE CONCERNING THE PRECISE EFFECTS OF JIMSON SEEDS IS APPARENTLY LIMITED AND IT IS, I UNDERSTAND, NOT NOW POSSIBLE TO SAY ACCURATELY WHAT AMOUNT OF

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SUCH SEEDS IN GRAIN WOULD BE TOLERATED BY A HUMAN BEING. IT APPEARS INCONTESTABLE THAT THE TOLERANCE IS MUCH HIGHER THAN THE TINY AMOUNTS OCCASIONALLY FOUND TO DATE IN THE U. S. IN COARSE GRAINS AND WHEAT. IN FACT, THE SEEDS WERE AT ONE TIME TAKEN REGULARLY IN SMALL DOSES TO ALLEVIATE SYMPTOMS OF ASTHMA.

THE U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE SETS STANDARDS FOR GRAINS. JIMSON WEED SEEDS ARE NOT SEPARATELY CONTROLLED, BUT FALL IN THE GENERAL CATEGORY OF FOREIGN MATTER, THE PERMISSIBLE PERCENTAGE OF WHICH VARIES ACCORDING TO THE TYPE OF GRAIN CONCERNED.

THE TYPE OF SORGHUM PURCHASED COMMERCIALY BY THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT IS USED IN THE U. S. PRIMARILY AS A FEEDGRAIN AND, I UNDERSTAND, USDA STANDARDS PERMIT UP TO 8 PERCENT FOREIGN MATTER FOR THAT GRADE OF SORGHUM.

INDIAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS HAVE TAKEN STEPS TO PROTECT CONSUMERS THERE AND HAVE STATED IN PARLIAMENT THAT THE PROBLEM IS RECOGNIZED AND UNDER CONTROL. USDA OFFICIALS ARE CONSULTING WITH INDIAN SUPPLY MISSION OFFICIALS IN WASHINGTON ON THE PROBLEM. THIS IS A MATTER ALSO FOR DISCUSSION BETWEEN THE BUYER AND THE U. S. EXPORTERS. HOWEVER, WE WILL, OF COURSE, DO ALL WE CAN TO PREVENT ANY RISK TO CONSUMERS. ROGERS

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